

**Amendments to the Abstract:**

Please amend the existing Abstract as follows:

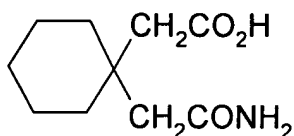
~~A process for the preparation of babalactam, a starting material for the anti-epileptic and anagelsic 1-aminomethylcyclohexane-1-acetic acid.~~

The present invention provides an improved process for the preparation of gabalactam of formula 1



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that includes preparing an aqueous solution of an alkali or alkaline earth metal hydroxide, adding bromine to the resulting solution to give an appropriate alkali or alkaline earth metal hypobromite; adding an amide of the formula 4



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aging the resultant mixture; heating the mixture to a temperature in a range of 80 to 100 degrees C; extracting with nonpolar solvent and distilling under reduced pressure to obtain gabalactam.